

The Battle of Evermore.

Music as a Never-ending Struggle for the Construction of Meaning

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Introduction

The chicherías opened to the public at noon, but the musicians went there only on weekends. Anyone could request them to play his favorite huayno. It was hard to find one the musicians did not know. More outsiders went to the chicha bars than to the inns. But sometimes a customer would come from a distant, quite different part of the country, from Huaraz, from Cajamarca, from Huancavelica, or from the provinces of Collao, and would ask them to play a completely unfamiliar huayno. Then the harpist's eyes would shine with joy; he would call the stranger over and ask him to sing it softly. Just once was enough. The violinist would learn it and play it with the harp accompanying him. The stranger almost always corrected him several times: "No. It's not like that; that's not the right way." And he would sing it in a loud voice, trying to force them to play it correctly. It was impossible. Even when playing the identical melody, the musicians would change the song into an Apurímac huayno, with a lively, tender rhythm. "Manan," the men from the cold country would shout; those from Collao would grow angry, and, if they were drunk, would silence the musicians by threatening them with big glasses of chicha. "It is the same, sir," the harpist would protest. "No, alk'o (dog!)" a man from Collao would shout. Both were right. (Arguedas 2002:45)

This fragment of the novel *Los ríos profundos* (Deep Rivers) by the Peruvian ethnologist and writer José María Arguedas characterizes the musical act in a way that is distinctive not only to the Andes: during the transfer and reception of music occurs a struggle for its reception and interpretation because the actors involved often pursue divergent and even contradictory goals. The main hypothesis of my article is that the musical act occurs always in an area of conflict between intention and understanding, between suggestion and interpretation.

When I speak here about a struggle for the construction of meaning, I am referring to a thought by John Fiske, who defines culture as a battle, as a process of struggle over the meaning of social experience, and hence as a conflict between hegemonic and subaltern readings (Fiske 1989:28). According to Fiske, a text never has an intrinsic or immanent meaning. Due to the fact that it allows different readings and interpretations, it always produces a tension between its structure and the social situation of the readers (Fiske 1989:104). The same is true for music: it also does not have an intrinsic or immanent meaning; a meaning is always ascribed to music by its reception.

Some ethnomusicologists have demonstrated that music informs about cultural and social boundaries, that e.g. musical genres in late capitalist societies can express the divergent experiences of different social classes (Kiel 1994:202; Shepherd 2012: 242-243). Ethnomusicologists have also often demonstrated that music is always consumed in relation to other life aspects, like gender, class, habitus, ethnicity, occupation or religions implications (Rice 2003:161; Turino 2008:111). All these examples show that music yields not only integrative social forces but that music is also an effective tool for the production of social distinction and cultural demarcation.

It would be futile to try to argue against this claim. What I want to propose here is that the struggle over the meaning of social experiences and differences is not only restricted to the setting of cultural or cohort's borders; namely, that the interpretation of music within a musical community does not work as harmoniously as the above-mentioned examples could suggest. Accordingly, I want to demonstrate that music reception triggers off a never-ending struggle, which can be solved only momentarily. In doing so, I want to distance myself from John Fiske's hypothesis that the negotiation of the production of meaning always befalls as a conflict between hegemonic and subaltern positions on the social field. Fiske's idea of cultural production implies a romanticized and dichotomized view of struggle between hegemonic and subaltern positions. My aim in this article is not to refuse his idea but to radicalize it, arguing that negotiation is a fundamental part of the production and consumption of music in all societies. In order to uphold my hypothesis, I will discuss three case studies relating to my own research, which shows that the collective interpretation of a musical piece inside a cultural group or social cohort also triggers a field of struggle within which cultural, political, religious and aesthetic imaginaries are intensely negotiated, but not necessarily coming to build discourses of resistance. In doing so, I hope to contribute to a better understanding of culture, free from essentialist and romanticized implications.

Before I discuss my examples, I want to introduce the ethnomusicological approach I am using for my research. In the last years, some ethnomusicologists have criticized the cultural relativist foundations and values of ethnomusicology, arguing that by negating universal qualities, cultural relativism does not gain access to meta-views in music studies. These authors propose a return to an analytical and systematic approach, which – in my mind – decontextualizes music both culturally and socially to a great extent.¹ Therefore, a second aim of this article is to defend the relativist foundations and values of ethnomusicology, proving that cultural relativist positions also produce knowledge at the meta-level, as the above-mentioned colleagues demand we should do.

Which Ethnomusicology?

According to Adelaida Reyes, one of the most important challenges in ethnomusicology since its birth in the post-war period has been the development of a unified perspective which encompasses the wide range of factors, methods and interests that constitute ethnomusicological approaches, without threatening the theoretical and methodological diversity with which they are identified (Reyes 2009:8). Since the 1950s, ethnomusicologists have tried to study music no longer as an autonomous, but as a social field that informs about human activities inside concrete societies. Taking this program into account, Anthony Seeger has formulated that the principal task for current ethnomusicologists is to constitute an approach that

¹ Savage and Brown have proposed, for example, to turn back to the big-picture questions of comparative musicology: classification, cultural evolution, human history, universals and biological evolution, creating a dichotomy between scientific and humanistic methods (2013:187). On his behalf, Michael Tenzer proposes to discover objective aesthetics by cultural comparison, taking referring to relativism “as something of very limited use” (Tenzer 2015:4) for the science. Unfortunately, this is not the right place to discuss such approaches extensively. Even considering that they also contribute to the building of knowledge concerning the role of music in human life, it seems to me that they decontextualize music in a dangerous way, displacing persons and processes out of our view. As Clarke has pointed out, this “natural-scientific turn” occurs in a time “in which the reduction to what is observable and measurable [...] is also integral to less friendly cultures fostered by neoliberalist economies” which favor “the abstraction of human activity and experience into data, in the interest of the kind of knowledge that enhance economic power” (Clarke 2014:5). I will come back to this point above.

avoids “getting caught up in one facet or another of music – sociology without attention to sound, analysis of performance without attention to social processes, the study of music that ignores movement, and so forth” (2006:229).² This is the premise that inspires me. Far from imposing a general or obligatory scheme for ethnomusicologists, I want to display the kind of ethnomusicology I stand for as the best option for a deep understanding of music as a social act.

I conceive ethnomusicology, like Merriam, as the study of music as culture (Merriam 1977:204). I remark here “music as culture” in order to emphasize the epistemological implications of that definition: Whereas the former definition by Merriam as “the study of music in culture” (1964:6) suggests that ethnomusicology is the study of music considering its cultural context, his later definition as “the study of music as culture” overcomes the false dichotomy between text and context and perceives music as a holistic social phenomenon, which, as Tia DeNora would say, always has intertextual relations to many other things (DeNora 2000:28). In his classical work *The Anthropology of Music* (1964), Merriam explains the following:

The model proposed here is a simple one and yet it seems to fulfill these requirements [the cultural and social backgrounds and the multiple facets of music as symbolic, aesthetic, formal, psychological, physical and so forth]. It involves study on three analytical levels – conceptualization about music, behavior in relation to music, and music sound itself. [...] The sound has structure, and it may be a system, but it cannot exist independently of human beings; music sound must be as the product of the behavior that produces it. [...] But behavior is itself underlain by a third level, the level of conceptualization about music. In order to act in a music system, the individual must first conceptualize what kind of behavior will produce the requisite sound. [...] It is at this level that the values about music are found, and it is precisely these values that filter upward through the system to effect the final product. (Merriam 1964:32-33)

² For a further discussion of this point in the history of ethnomusicology, see Merriam (1964:17-35), Hood (1971:2-5), Nettl (1964:12-19; 1983:131-146), Rice (1987:471), Seeger (2006:232), Bohlman (2007:95-114) Stobart (2008:12-19), and Reyes (2009:3-8).

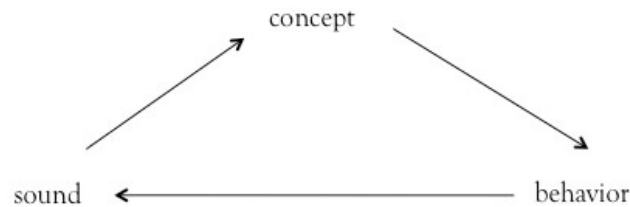


Diagram 1: Merriam's model (1964)

Merriam's model gained wide acceptance within the discipline during the 1970s, and came to be criticized during the 1980s due to its static character: If music is culture, and if culture, as the writing-culture-debate made more than evident, is continuously changing (Clifford 1986:18-19), then Merriam's model needs historical supplementing, which considers the formative process of the three mentioned levels. During the 1980s, Timothy Rice tried to remodel Merriam's conceptualization of ethnomusicology, according to the ethnological issues of this time. Trying also to reconcile music history's concerns with musical structure with the anthropological concerns of ethnomusicology, Rice argues the following:

... symbolic systems ... are historically constructed, socially maintained and individually applied. Instantly I recognized these as the "formative process" that I had been searching for. Here was a three-part model, analogous to Merriam's that was easy to remember and that seemed to balance social, historical and individual processes and forces in ways that seemed immediately and intuitively satisfying. [...] Simply put, I now believe that ethnomusicologists should study the "formative processes" in music, that they should ask and attempt to answer this deceptively simple question: how do people make music or, in its more elaborate form, how do people historically construct, socially maintain and individual create and experience music? (Rice 1987:473)

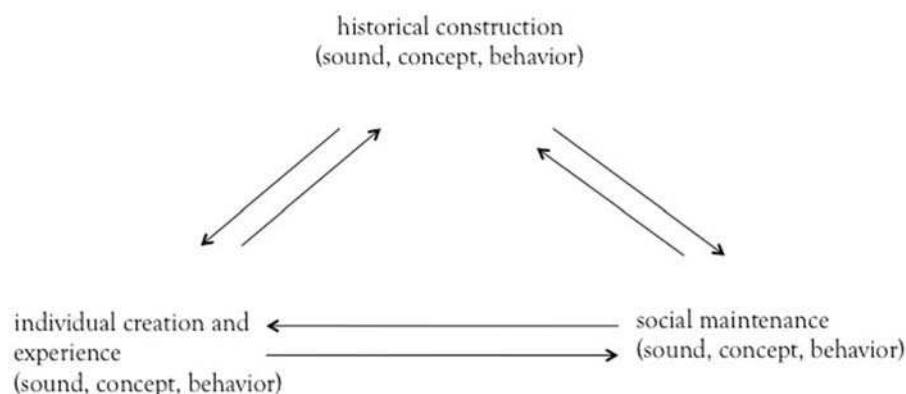


Diagram 2: Merriam's model remodeled by Rice (1987)

Seeing the necessity to research the formative processes in the three levels of music, I want to introduce Rice's additions to Merriam's model into my work. Although Rice considered the role of social negotiation between musicians and audiences in the musical construction process, he did not refer profoundly to the performative role of people creating meaning during the consumption of music.³ As we know, music always implies different actors, like musicians, producers, helpers and listeners (Seeger 2006:230). Consequently, Rice's model needs complementing as well, which should enable us to define more clearly the performative role of the people involved in the social construction of meaning in music making and consumption. This is the reason why I want to introduce the concept *musicizing* by Christopher Small, with which he interprets music as a social act between producers, musicians and audiences. According to Small, the meaning of music lies not in objects, not in musical works at all, but in what people do with music, arguing that it is only by understanding what people do when they take part in musical acts that enables

³ Ethnomusicologists have commonly restricted their interest to the actions of musicians as experts. In chapter VII of Merriam's *The Anthropology of Music*, he considers only musicians in the analysis of social behavior (Merriam 1964:13-144). And even though Rice argues that the audience should be related to the production of meaning, he seems to focus on the individual and collective creativity of musicians in his model (1987: 473). Starting in 2003, Rice reinforced the role of the audience, arguing that the coherence of the ethnomusicological work "would be situated in subject's biographies and in the interaction of people occupying slightly different subject's positions but interacting in time and place" (Rice 2003:157). The performative character of the social acts remains without mention.

us to comprehend the function music has in their life. Converting the English substantive “music” into a verb – to music – Small proposes to expect every activity inside a musical act to be a performance which reproduces and reinvents sonic, behavioral and conceptual knowledge:

To music is take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing. We might at times even extend its meaning to what the person is doing who takes the tickets at the door or the hefty men who shift the piano and the drums or the roadies who set up the instruments and carry out the sound checks or the cleaners who clean up after everyone else have gone. They, too, are all contributing to the nature of the event that is a musical performance. (1998:6)

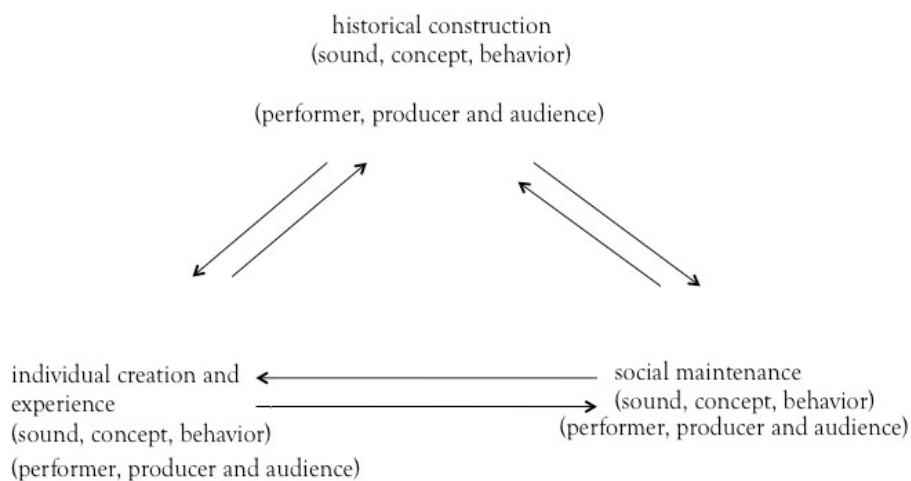


Diagram 3: Merriam’s model remodeled by Rice (1987) and complemented with Small’s concept of musicking (1998)

What I appreciate in Small’s idea of *musicking* is that such an approach allows us to analyze the historical formation of sound’s structures, behavior and concepts as a particular process in a given time and place, which involves all the actors *musicking* (not only playing and hearing, as Rice defines it). Actually, the musical knowledge inside a culture is never restricted to the specialist players, including promoter’s, recipient’s or listener’s knowledge and capacities; likewise, musical knowledge is never concluded because new songs, performances, ideas or forms of behavior vary constantly, creating new items for negotiation. It is for this reason

that I am speaking of a never-ending battle for the production of meaning and interpretations.

Having clarified the approach, I want to analyze now how individuals and groups negotiate performative and discursive continuities and discontinuities in sound structures, behaviors and concepts by *musicking*.

What is to be a Sikuani?

One of my first field experiences was related to archaeomusicological research focused on the deer skull globular flutes from the Inca epoch, named *uauco*. The *uauco* is mentioned by several chroniclers (Cobo 1964, II:274; Guaman Poma 1988, I:294-295 and Arriaga 1968:213), and sometimes spoken of as an “exotic trumpet” by modern scientists like the French couple D’Harcourt (1925:77), or the North American musicologist Robert Stevenson (1960:21).⁴ Nowadays deer skull flutes are extinct in the central Andes. The last mentions of the instrument I found were from the year 1951, when the Peruvian archaeologist Arturo Jiménez Borja reported one item in Cajamarca, in northern Peru (Jiménez Borja 1951:9). Beyond the above-mentioned descriptions, there were pre-Hispanic iconographical representations of deer skull instruments from the period 800 A. C., from the Inca empire by the indigenous chronicler Guaman Poma de Ayala (ca. 1613), and from the 18th century (see Mendívil 2009:69-70).

⁴ Although many historical documents spoke about a “trumpet”, there were some chroniclers who referred to the instrument as a flute. It was impossible to determine that through the iconographical analysis. It was not until I first saw the instrument in Colombia that I came to the conviction that it was a closed globular flute with a duct (Mendívil 2009:174).

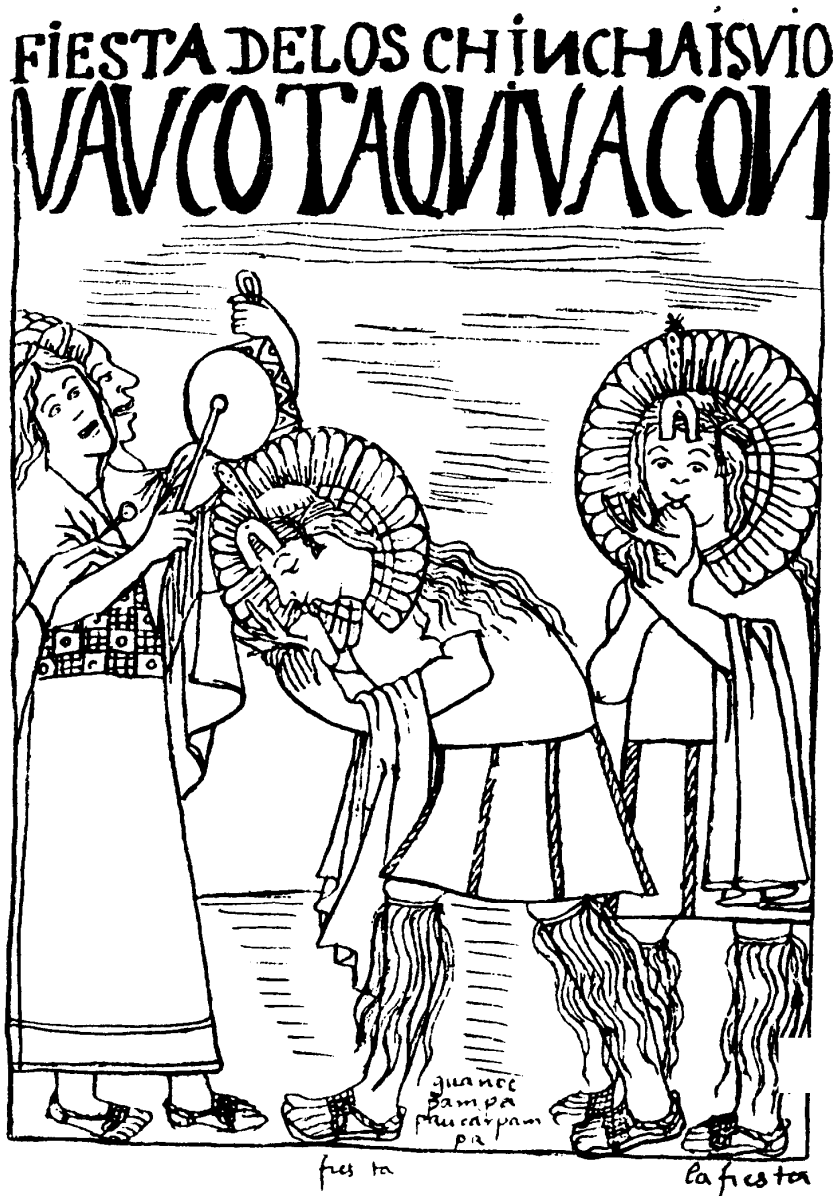


Fig 1: Deer skull flute by Guaman Poma de Ayala (1613)

Archaeomusicological approaches focus commonly on the measuring of instruments coming from archaeological contexts, meaning on the analysis of items

normally stored in museums of musical instruments or in private collections. Unfortunately, the deer skull flutes were not preserved because the pre-Hispanic indigenous groups cremated them in the same way they did their sacral utensils after the ceremonies during which they played them. I wondered then how I could write about an instrument archaeomusicologically if an archaeological item does not exist, and if its tradition is extinct. Furthermore, how could I get access to information about its musical function and its cultural dimension if I had no more than confusing, silent and one-dimensional representations of the instrument? Inspired by Dale Olsen's approach for archaeomusicology (2001:23),⁵ I developed my own interpretative research scheme, comparing archaeological, historical and iconographic sources with ethnological data (Mendívil 2009:62-63). Having localized the instruments among indigenous groups from Colombia (Yepes 1979:13; Bermúdez 1985:44-45), I went to the Colombian Llanos in order to gain ethnographic material for comparison.⁶

The Sikuani are the biggest indigenous group from the Colombian Llanos, the Eastern Plains. Their main settlement area is currently at the Upper Vichada, in the Vichada region. Formerly living as little nomadic units, at present the Sikuani people live commonly as sedentary groups not exceeding 150 individuals. The

⁵ Commonly archaeomusicological approaches were concentrated on the "reconstruction of music history". Since the most ancient music cultures do not have developed notation, archaeomusicologists try to interpret the archaeological "rest" of the musical culture they find (Lund 1980; Hickmann 1990). Dale Olsen's model tries to find answers to questions about the music of ancient cultures, considering four approaches for the analysis: the archaeomusicological, the iconographic, historiographic and ethnographic analogies (2001:27-28). Because there were no specimens of the deer skull flutes, I considered an archaeological instead of an archaeomusicological process in order to interpret the cultural significance of deer in the pre-Hispanic cultures (Mendívil 2009:63).

⁶ Currently, there are different traditions of deer skull flutes among South American indigenous groups, like the Tucano in Brazil and Colombia, the Ayamán in Venezuela or the Sikuani in Colombia and Venezuela. Prior to my research, the study of the pre-Hispanic and the living instrument had run separate from each other. Jiménez Borja (1951:10) tried to relate the flutes described by colonial chroniclers with the flutes mentioned by Acosta Saignes (1927), but he paid no particular attention beyond mentioning the relation. As Olsen proposes, I decided to collect the ethnological data myself for comparison. My decision to go to the Sikuani in Colombia was fortuitous. Colombian colleagues were the only ones who responded to my requests. I wanted to go to the Cauca Region, during my visit to Colombia I was prevented from doing so by the guerrilla (see Mendívil 2009).

village community Pueblo Nuevo, which I visited, is a sedentary *comunidad* and belongs to the Indian Reservation of Santa Teresita del Tuparro. Pueblo Nuevo has a population of around 80 inhabitants, who have been strongly westernized due to the proximity to Cumaribo, the largest administrative center of the region. Despite these influences, Sikauni still wear their traditional costumes. According to the ethnographic reports I read, there was a deer skull flute among the Sikuani, which was called *oewei mataeto* in Sikuani and *cacheovenao* in Spanish. The flutes were played only during the *Itomo* ceremony, the well-known ceremony of the second burial. Some years after the death of their relatives, the Sikuani excavate the remains and select some bones like the skull or the humerus in order to bury them again after having honored them for three days with rituals and dances. During the dance juju – pronounced ho-ho – Sikuani indigenous play the *cacheovenao* in order to venerate their ancestors (Bermúdez 1985: 44; Ortiz, González y Rivas 1986: 115). Was this flute the same that Guaman Poma portrayed in early colonial time?



Fig 2: Anselmo Pomaré playing the deer skull flute in Pueblo Nuevo

a) 

b) 

c) 

d) 

e) 

Musical example 1: Deer flutes playing by Ansemlo Pomaré and Ramón Sánchez in Pueblo Nuevo

In Bogota, I contacted Sikuani activists and travelled with them to Cumaribo, where the flutes “still were played”. When I arrived at Cumaribo, the town was absorbed in electoral campaigns for the local government, which was claimed by two political groups. During the days I spent in Cumaribo, I collected extremely contradictory information about the *cachoevenao*: while some informants declared the flutes as extinct instruments, others told me that the flute tradition was still alive and that the *cachoevenao* was the most representative instrument of the Sikauni culture. I resolved the paradox only some days later, when I understood that these interpretations corresponded to the political positions that were opposed in the elections: one indigenous group converted to evangelical beliefs, competing with unconverted indigenous people who still believe in their own traditional religion (Mendívil 2009:141-142).

Actually, neither the Itomo ceremony nor the dance were performed in Pueblo Nuevo or Cumaribo, and for several years, the flutes had been played only in private contexts, above all for curious ethnomusicologists like me. But my interest in

the *owewi mataeto* fanned the discussion again. Whereas converted Sikuani see *juju* and the deer skull flutes as a harmful cultural element and take away from it, the unconverted “prevented” its extinction by postponing the realization of the Itomo ceremony and of the dance into a future time (Mendívil 2009:143).

A closer look reveals that these apparently paradoxical statements among the Sikuani are not contradictory, but instead reflect different ideological positions towards the instrument inside its society: whereas the one group saw it as a heretical issue which damages the Sikuani identity and destiny, the other group hoist the flutes as the Sikuani cultural symbol *per excellence* and defend it in order to oppose the rise of the evangelical churches in the region. If my interpretation is correct I would say that the Sikuani were discussing whether the deer skull globular flutes were able to represent the Sikuani identity properly. Although it was not even played, *juju* music in Cumaribo and Pueblo Nuevo created a field of conflict within which the Sikauni discussed and negotiated the cultural image of the group.

Discussing Schlager and Germanness

My second example comes from postmodern Germany, and shows that even the reception of a musical genre inside a given community is not free of struggle and aesthetic negotiations. The German Schlager is surely a musical genre which has been rarely associated with clashes and skirmishes. As a well-known affirmative genre, the German Schlager were often related to conservative consumers who supposedly used music to escape from their everyday problems (see Dietrich 2002:23; Höfig 2000:108; von Schoenebeck 1998:280; Terkesidis 1996:121).⁷ But taking a closer look inside the scene – as I did for four years, during which I visited concerts, television settings, recording sessions and other events in order to research how German people build a feeling of *heimat* by consuming Schlager music – it is evident that even in the affirmative world of German Schlager, there are musical and aesthetic disagreements.

⁷ Accordingly, many scholars see the Schlager’s idyllic world as a realm for escapism (Dietrich 2002:25), or as music which, contrary to other genres like chanson or rock, has not been developed both musically or ideologically (Terkessidis 1996:121). German Schlager music is also defined as music which teaches obedience, order, tradition and national pride together with other conservative values (Schoenebeck 1998:288-289), and as merciless nationalistic cheerfulness as well (Seeßlen 1993:11).

Elsewhere I have defined German Schlager as a conservative discourse with a musical correlate (Mendívil 2008:166). When I use the adjective conservative, I mean a politically oriented discourse against what Anthony Giddens called the reflexivity of radical modernity: the fact that social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information about those very practices, thus constitutively altering their character (Giddens 1990:38). Accordingly, the German Schlager responds to all political and musical changes with skepticism. I do not mean that transformations are generally not tolerated – they are. But in order to be accepted, they have to be domesticated, becoming conservative practices. Therefore, negotiation is a very important aspect in the reception of German Schlager.⁸

I have had the opportunity to see such a hard negotiation during my fieldwork in 2003, when Stefanie Hertel, a female singer which had for many years been considered the German Schlager Queen, and Stefan Mross, her husband at the time, tried to enthrall their audience during the recording sessions for the “Winterfest der Volksmusik” at the Freiheitshalle in Hof, by playing the song “Mambo Fieber” (Mambo Fever). As the name suggests, the song should evoke a Caribbean feeling in this – according to the name of the TV-show – wintery, snowy atmosphere. Instead of a purely musical performance, the audience assisted in a theatrical spectacle: Stefanie Hertel, disguised as a peasant grandma, and Stefan Mross, disguised as an old farmer, came stumbling onto the stage while the first chords of the song ran out: “Oh, not again, please”, sighed “grandma” Hertel, and tried with great physical effort to follow the mambo steps. She and Stefan Mross began to sing the song, but with modified text:

Stefanie:	Oh, no, no mambo again, please Who has organized this terror for us? Dance, if you still have the energy cause the stars will shine until midnight Oh, no, no mambo again, please
Stefan:	oh, this mambo fever As long as the night is high
Stefanie:	Oh, this mambo fever...
Stefan:	the sun goes down, the hearts awake
Both:	When is this mambo finished?

⁸ As shown in my book, this domestication can also imply non-musical aspects related to the genre. For example, gender otherness is commonly converted into heterosexual normativity, as in the case of Patrick Lindner (see Mendívil 2008:266).

“This is nothing for us anymore” confessed Stefanie Hertel after singing and dancing the mambo. Her partner answered: “Let’s try it once rather with a waltz”:

Stefanie: Waltz, let us dance a waltz
This beautiful and comfy waltz
step by step.
Stefan: Right, a waltz, again and again a waltz
and the audience can dance along,
that is right!
Both: yes, waltz fever once more again
rotating in circles repeatedly,
a waltz again and again...



Fig 3: Stefanie Hertel and Stefan Mross at the Freiheitshalle in Hof (2003)

What superficially might seem to be a harmless parody of the uncommon piece, upon closer inspection turns into an important moment of negotiation for acceptance and acknowledgment of the new rhythm by the conservative German audience: the expressed anger of the performers due to the mambo rhythm as well as the shift of responsibility for the song towards an unspecified third person (who has organized this terror for us?), served at the Freiheitshalle in Hof to reject the

musical elements unfamiliar to the average Schlager music consumers. Both these attitudes prepared the motion into a decidedly German tradition: the timeless, beautiful and comfortable tradition of the waltz, to which everyone sways rhythmically with arms and hands. The Latin American mambo appears no longer as an alien element in the repertoire of the German Schlager musicians, but as a non-dangerous escapade, as a youthful folly, which could be mitigated by the fact that they swear eternal loyalty to the German waltz.

Negotiating Ayacucho between Armed Struggle and Love Songs

New musical elements are not only discussed in the German Schlager community; they were also negotiated inside the Ayacucho-music scene in Lima, Peru, my third example here. The Ayacucho-huayno⁹ experienced its rise during the 1980s when Peru was shook by the political violence triggered by the guerrilla organization Shining Path.¹⁰ At this time Manuelcha Prado, Martina Portocarrero, Nelly Munguía, the Dúo José María Arguedas (Julio and Walter Humala), Ranulfo Fuentes and Carlos Falconí among other artists started to compose and perform huaynos related to the war situation, reaching with this topic an interregional audience, above all the attention of people who were interested in the current political situation of the country. This generation of musicians created a new concept of authenticity,

⁹ Huayno is one of the most popular musical genres in the Peruvian Andes. The “conventional” structure of Peruvian huayno consists of three or four stanzas, an instrumental repetition of the stanza, an interlude, (called *codo* (elbow) in some regions) and a kind of coda called *fuga*. The stanzas are sung either in Quechua, Spanish, or a mixture of both (see Mendívil 2014). The war generation introduced musical elements coming from Argentinian *zamba* and Bolivian *takirari*, like the use of the minor subdominant or contrapuntal arrangements. For a deep discussion about the transformation of Ayacucho-huayno into political song, see Tucker (2013) and Ritter (2012).

¹⁰ In May of 1980, a Maoist fraction of the Peruvian Communist party known as Shining Path initiated the “revolutionary war” against the Peruvian State, causing the deepest institutional crisis Peru had faced since its independence (Kent 1993). Much of the guerrilla activities were concentrated in Ayacucho, a Peruvian department in the South-Central Andes, where Shining Path was founded. For an overview of the political violence in Peru, see Gorriti (1990). For a very interesting analysis of Shining Path’s ideology, see Starn (1995).

which combined traditional musical issues with political statements against the war and the inquiries of the military forces in Ayacucho (Mendívil forthcoming). The scene changed radically in the 1990s, when the Peruvian State vanquished Shining Path, and the country fell under the neoliberal civil dictatorship of Alberto Fujimori. New performers like Hermanos Gaitán Castro, William Luna, Max Castro and Antología began their careers by recording songs of the war generation (Tucker 2013:127-131; Ritter 2012:211-214). But, under the leadership of Julián Fernández, they slowly turned away from politics and moved towards less delicate topics such as romantic love or the beauty of the Andean landscape. Twenty years later, Ayacucho-huayno had turned to a romantic, commercially oriented genre, causing a discrepancy between the war-generation and the new interpreters.

These differences were also discussed inside the musical structure of the huayno. Thus, music examples 2 and 3 show the current radical differences in Ayacucho-huayno: While the war-generation preferred to play huaynos with controlled innovations, not profoundly altering the traditional scheme of huayno, the new generation shows an affinity for radical innovation, repeating musical elements from the international genre *balada* or *canción romántica*.

Transcripción: Marino Martínez E.

$\text{♩} = 78 \text{ ca.}$

U-na ni-ña tris-tey dul-ce llo-ra por la ma-dru-ga-da ma-dru-ga-da dea-gua-

ce-ro y de sí-len-cio in-fí-ni-to sien-teen su ser i-no-cen-te la po-bre-za quea-pri-

sio-na ay, a-za-res de la vi-da, gui-ta-rra, a-com-pá-ña-meas-te llan-to, [Recitado]

Nues-tra vi-da pe-re-gri-na y las an-gus-tias del al-ma no son vai-ve-nes e-ter-nos

los al-bo-res dea-le-gri-a pa-ra los po-bres del mun-do sea-nun-cian ya en mis

a-cor-des, gui-ta-rra, de-ja ya tus no-tas tris-tes. Teen-se-ña-réa ver el

mun-do an-cho, ya no tan a-je-no, sus va-lles, ma-res y de-sier-tos

pá-ja-ros de mil co-lo-res, tri-nos que en-vuel-ven la vi-da y ver-sos quee-le-van al hom

Musical example 2: Huayno Trilce by Manuelcha Prado. Transcription Marino Martínez

2 Ejemplo musical 3
Trilce

bre Yá fi - raí de míc - xis - ton cia de - jar - te co - mo he - ren - cia u - na pa - tria lin -

day lí bre day lí bre, guí - ta - rra, a - com - pá - ña - mos -

te con - to, guí - ta - rra, a - com - pá - ña - mos - tou - man cio.

Musical example 3: Canción Vienes y te vas by Wiliam Luna

The divergent musical forms also express divergent conceptions of huayno as a genre. Thus, despite the common cultural experiences of the musicians, and despite the fact that they share the same social context and the same audience, both generations distrust one another. Marino Martínez, a guitar player from the older generation, says the following:

... emblematic composers from our generation such as Dolorier, Fuentes, Falconí were linked to teaching, and in the case of Ranulfo [Fuentes] he was a teacher of literature. No doubt that they have all read. You realize that by the way they wrote their lyrics. Yes, a feature of our generation was the intention to make poetry and to write verses with a political statement, but respecting the universe of the Quechua culture [...] this was very important and is a counteraction to the current huayno performers. [A] political context for ideological and intellectual development does not exist any longer. [...] I think they [the new performers] are not people who have an interest in education [...] We played huayno because we had important things to say [a political motivation]. The new performers sing huayno because they want to be stars ... (interview at 10.04.2012, my translation)

Whereas the war-generation remarks on the political implication of art as a sign of culture and history, new musicians, like Max Castro and the leader of the Antología, Dilio Galindo, argue that they no longer speak about the war because they speak about their own experiences as young people, that is, about their life in a globalized world after the political conflicts related to Ayacucho in the 1980s

(personal communication). The official site of Antología remarks that the group's music refers to its experiences, hopes and dreams:

Antología, lead by Dilio Galindo, begins its career bringing its musical project everywhere inside and outside our land. It is a careful selection of musical pieces of the traditional Peruvian repertoire, and it is the continuing of our musical heritage, but reinforced by the fresh inspiration of the new composers. The voice of Dilio can be heard with an increasing intensity, the new voice of a generation which wants to be the protagonist of its present and its future, a generation which reaffirms the love for its land, its traditions and costumes, and which proudly says to all the world: This is the expression of the contemporary Andean music which we want to convert into a universal music (<http://www.antologia.com.pe/biografia/>, my translation)



Fig 4: Grupo Antología

Several allusions in the text build clear dichotomies to the old generation: Antología plays inside as well as outside the country, and it plays traditional repertoire, but is also inspired by new composers, and sings about both the present and the future – the past remains a field for the anachronistic huayno of the old generation. Finally, it no longer sings about local problems, but about love, which converts the local Ayacucho music into a universal one.

Does the huayno have to be contemporary, traditional, modern, political or romantic? What is being negotiated between the old and the new generations is not the musical tradition as one self-referential entity, but as the expression of divergent life experiences (Mendívil forthcoming). The struggle here is not about

defining the musical essence of huayno as a genre, but, as Michelle Bigenho has said about the Bolivian ensembles, about two different forms producing authenticity: one that constructs it socially and historically, and another which constructs it as relating to personal experience (Bigenho 2002:16). Are not both generations right, like the musicians in the *chichería* in Arguedas' novel?

The Battle of Evermore

The song *The Battle of Evermore* by the British rock band Led Zeppelin, which lends its name to my article, refers through obscure metaphors to the struggle between unnamed forces. Due to the diffuse language of the text, the song is interpreted as a metaphor of the never-ending battle between good and evil, between male and female, between old and new, and even as a symbolic representation of the constant dispute between Robert Plant and Jimmy Page over the leadership of the group. I do not think that my role as an ethnomusicologist is to verify the truthfulness of such statements. I find it more imperative to confirm that music always opens up a space for the construction of meaning through the negotiation of concepts, behavior and sounds.

Discussing the production and consumption of music by three different cultural groups, I have demonstrated that culturally oriented ethnomusicology also can formulate propositions about music transcending particular cases. Why is that necessary? As Clarke critically pointed out, the call for a new comparative musicology in Savage and Brown's statement quickly turns to a call for the new comparative musicology, implying something that we can take for granted (Clarke 2014:2). But as Philip Bohlman said, the future of ethnomusicology is not in the standardization of theories and methods but in the development of a common culture between different ethnomusicologies (Bohman 2008:111). I am sure that approaches like a new comparative musicology by Savage and Brown (2013) can contribute to developing interesting aspects in music studies, but only if they remain as a new item inside the theoretical and methodological diversity which characterizes our ethnomusicologies. An ethnomusicology which reduces its task to a decontextualized comparison and focuses on abstract measurements and classifications would estrange music from its social components, divorcing it from the producers and consumers. For this reason we still need a humanist ethnomusicology which informs about musical diversity. John Blacking has written that sound may be the object of ethnomusicology, but that man is the subject (Blacking 1971:26).

Like Thomas Turino, I think that “one of the useful social functions of fields like ethnomusicology and anthropology is to learn and teach about radically different ways of conceptualizing the world so that we might have more models to think with and act from” (Turino 2008:225). Observing what human beings actually do with music, we are able to speak about music as a human phenomenon, but, as Anthony Seeger says, eluding to “the old demons of authenticity, immutability, and nationalism” (Seeger 2006:226).

As I have shown, the interpretation and reception of music always opens a field for conflicts. These conflicts could be between consumers, as in Cumaribo, between performers and audiences, like in the case of the German Schlager, or between musicians, like in the case of the Ayacucho-huayno scene. But beyond the specifics of the contexts I discussed, the examples show that the production and consumption of music always also constitutes a battlefield for the construction of meaning because people not only try to interpret music in relation to their own experiences, but they also try to convince others that their own interpretation is right. It is an infinite struggle because as Arguedas Solomonic concludes in his novel, all actors – musicians, helpers, performers and audiences – are right. Music creates a battlefield for the formulation of individual or collective interpretations, an infinite battlefield for the construction of meaning within which each statement must be defended and conquered. What a surprise then, that fans of Japanese *visual kei* use the expression “sanzen” to say “I go to a concert”, which literally means something like “I go to the battle!”¹¹

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¹¹ Personal communication of my friend and colleague Oliver Seibt.

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